K

St. Mary's Isle

A POEM

J. W. Reynolds delin.t — J. Powell sculp.t

London.

PRINTED for the AUTHOR

Sold by J. Debrett, Piccadilly and R. Wetton, Chertsey, Surrey.

1800.

Vincent Jecit. et fculp.

Printed by S. Gosnell, Little Queen Street, Holborn.

SAINT ANNE's HILL.

A

INTRODUCTION.

TO A

POEM.

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MDCCC.

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A

POEM.

39.
1.14.
685.

Printed by S. Gosnell, Little Queen Street, Holborn.

INTRODUCTION.

"HERE ſhould my wonder dwell, and here my praiſe,

" But my fix'd thought my wand'ring eye betrays;

" Viewing a neighb'ring hill, whoſe top of late

" A chapel crown'd, 'till in the common fate

" Th' adjoining abbey fell—(may no ſuch ſtorm

" Fall on our times, where ruin muſt reform!)"

COOPER'S HILL.

COOPER'S

" COOPER'S HILL is the work that confers upon Denham
" the rank and dignity of an original author. He ſeems to
" have been, at leaſt among us, the author of a ſpecies of
" compoſition that may be denominated local poetry, of
" which the fundamental ſubject is ſome particular land-
" ſcape, to be poetically deſcribed, with the addition of
" ſuch embelliſhments as may be ſupplied by hiſtory,
" retroſpection, or incidental meditation."

Dr. JOHNSON's Lives of the Poets, vol. i. p. 114.

" The firſt miniſter of ſtate has not ſo much buſineſs in
" public, as a wiſe man has in private; if the one have
" little leiſure to be alone, the other has leſs leiſure to be

" in

" in company; the one has but part of the affairs of one
" nation, the other all the works* of God under his
" conſideration."

Cowley's Diſcourſe on Solitude,
8vo. edit. vol. ii. p. 695.

* See the eighteenth ſtanza of the following Poem.

TO

THE HONOURABLE

CHARLES JAMES FOX,

REPRESENTATIVE IN PARLIAMENT

FOR THE

CITY OF WESTMINSTER;

THE FOLLOWING POEM

IS,

UPON HIS BIRTH-DAY, JANUARY 24th, A. D. 1800,

RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE OBLIGED AUTHOR.

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SAINT ANNE'S HILL.

POET.

SEE, ſtern Aquarius mounts the ſtormy ſky,
Wide o'er its cope his duſky mantle throws,
And ſummons rigid Eurus to ſupply
His drizzling urn with hoary fleeting ſnows.

Sad, like theſe ſcenes, his fancy damp'd and chill,
How ſhall the bard, O Muſe! thy call obey,—
To hail, on yonder inſulated hill,
Its hoſpitable Maſter's natal day?

THE MUSE.

Their path purſue, who, " fall'n on evil days,"
And bent by frowning Fortune's iron rod,
Snatch'd from her envious graſp the deathleſs bays,
And Fame's proud eminence ſublimely trod.

They mock'd the human tempeſt's idle rage,
And, ſcorning ſtern Adverſity's controul,
Chill penury ne'er damp'd *their* glowing page,
" Nor froze the genial current of their ſoul."

POET.

How ſhall this verſe obtain *his* judging ear,
Accuſtom'd to his peerleſs Homer's ſtrain *;
Whoſe lofty themes his ſtudious hours endear,
With all the Grecian muſes in his train?

* Note I.

THE

THE MUSE.

What though the ſoaring herald of the morn
Till with his rapid ſtrains the glowing ſphere,
The lonely penſive redbreaſt on his thorn
May ſing as ſweet in muſing Pity's ear.

Upon his ruſtic reed, the paſt'ral ſwain
May breathe through hearts with ſympathy endu'd,
A lay as pleaſing as a Pindar's ſtrain,
The dulcet "ſtill ſmall voice of Gratitude."—

Haſte then thy tributary ſong to pay,—
And fearleſs take the long-ſuſpended lyre
From yonder duſky willow's leafleſs ſpray;—
Its ſylvan voice the heart will beſt inſpire.

POET.

Yet, ſoft Enchantreſs of the laureat tribe!
Tune with thy magic hands its trembling ſtrings,
Give them thy fire ethereal to imbibe,
And prompt thy penſive vot'ry while he ſings.—

Ardent to ſhine in Glory's bright career,
Freſh like the morn hailing the orient ſun,
" Fluſh'd with the ſpirit of Life's vernal year,"
Lo!—the Patrician's arduous race begun:—

With claſſic Lore, with lib'ral Arts imbu'd,
With Hiſt'ry's ample ſtores enrich'd his mind,
With Genius, as with patriot Zeal, endu'd,
He leaves each proud Competitor behind.

See,

See, Oratory "marks him for her own,"
And arms his tongue with her reſiſtleſs fire,
And bids him to the chaplet of renown,
Like great Demoſthenes of old, aſpire.

Arriv'd at length at Glory's radiant goal,
Crown'd with pre-eminence in Freedom's cauſe,
New trials then await the ſteadfaſt ſoul,
The fickle gales of popular applauſe.

Envy, grim, livid monſter, ſtill purſues *
The patriot ſtateſman and th' enlighten'd ſage;
O'er their fair merits ſheds her blighting dews,
And blots with rancour Time's hiſtoric page.

* Note II.

Sated with fame, weary'd with feuds of State,
The haraſs'd mind longs to enjoy repoſe,
And like, in ev'ry age, the truly Great,
To muſe o'er life, and dignify its cloſe.

Thoughtful on Liberty's declining ſtar,
Thus Tully mus'd in Tuſculum's retreats,
Exchang'd the Roman ſenate and the bar
For calm Philoſophy's Elyſian ſeats.

Thus, on Salona's oak-clad, tow'ring Scite,
Th' Imperial purple Stole aſide was laid,
And Dioclefian view'd with more delight
The rural honours of his native ſhade *.

* Note III.

And

And thus, O Fox! in Wiſdom's golden hour,
She led THEE from the ſtateſman's ceaſeleſs ſtrife
To mild Philoſophy's * ſequeſter'd bow'r,
To rural ſtudies and to tranquil life.

What claſſic ſcenes ariſe on ev'ry ſide,
The ſage's and the poet's mind to fill!—
And yet no bard the tribute hath ſupply'd,
That Truth demands for ſainted Anna's Hill.

The variegated landſcape to explore,
Th' Hiſtoric Muſe here loves to take her ſtand;
And points, applauding Britain's chiefs of yore,
To Thames' green margent her recording hand.

* Note IV.

" Ruffling

" Ruffling yon tide, of oaks an ambuſh'd grove *,

" Of old, oppos'd the Julian hoſt in vain;—

" And *there* Caſſivelaunus nobly ſtrove

" From Cæſar's brow the laurel to obtain.

" Ye Britons! ſtill with pride yon mead ſurvey †,

" Where Freedom's banner ſtill appears to wave,

" Where frowning John, on Freedom's natal day,

" The Charter of the Realm reluctant gave."

—Mark, where o'er Chertſey's duſky, hallow'd tow'r,

Th' hibernal ſun's reflected radiance glows!—

Thus o'er the darkneſs of the mental pow'r

The ſun of Truth his cheering luſtre throws.

* Note V. † Runnymede.

Thus

Thus in theſe Mercian realms in times of yore,
Of Pagan ignorance the midnight reign,
Her rugged ſons, ſoften'd by ſacred lore,
Aſpir'd the Chriſtian's radiant crown to gain:

Caſting their barbarous idol gods away *,
They bleſs'd the light Celeſtial Truth imparts;
And felt Religion's heav'n-deſcended ray
Illume their minds and humanize their hearts.

Then roſe Certeſia's † ſtately cloiſter'd fane
With regal and with papal honours crown'd,
Where flock'd the zealous, ſcallopp'd, pilgrim train
To ſhrines of martyrs and of ſaints renown'd.

* Note VI. † Note VII.

Sacred

Sacred through civil ſtorms the fabric ſtood
Revolving ages of her Saxons reign;
And, phœnix-like, roſe from the fire and blood
That mark'd the fury of th' invading Dane.

Here pious Henry, on his regal bier *,
Found a ſhort refuge from a life of woes;
And *here*, renouncing laurel'd Glory's ſphere,
Have ſages, ſtateſmen, heroes ſought repoſe.

'Till haughty Tudor's wild capricious guſt
The cloyſters doom'd to his unſparing rage:—
Then ſunk the venerable pile in duſt †,
And with it murky Superſtition's age.—

* Note VIII. † Note IX.

But

But arts and commerce ſoon enrich'd the land,
Science her radiant head began to rear;
And, fraught with fancy, as with precepts bland,
The gentle Muſes lov'd to wander here.

In Fancy's eye, here Denham wanders ſtill
With ſtately pace around the verdant maze;
Points with parental pride to "Cooper's Hill,"
Grac'd with his nervous and his moral lays;

Points to the willow'd Thames *, winding along,
In placid ſtate, to proud Auguſta's marts,
Where buſy Commerce, by her ſwarming throng,
The boundleſs treaſures of the globe imparts.

* Note X.

Beneath

Beneath yon ſolemn cypreſs careleſs laid,
Crowning the Hill, he erſt delighted view'd*,
" The melancholy Cowley's" penſive ſhade
Still fondly paints the charms of ſolitude†.

Short was that ſolitude's Utopian dream,
His muſe ſo long in fairy viſions ſung:—
Too ſoon, in life's full prime, near yonder ſtream,
" Flow'd the laſt accents from his tuneful tongue."

Imperial Windſor's proudly-creſted tow'r,
Here hapleſs Otway, with his loyal praiſe‡,
Still ſeems to hail, though wan Misfortune's pow'r
His fate embitter'd and abridg'd his days.

* Note XI. † Note XII. ‡ Note XIII.

—But hark! the happier Bard of Twick'nam's ſhades
Pours his mellifluent tide of verſe along,—
And gives thoſe ſtately woods and duſky glades
A brighter fame in eternizing ſong.

—Yet not alone from bards of claſſic fame
Shall ſainted Anna's Hill * derive its praiſe;—
Severer Science here aſſerts her claim,
And wreaths her laurel with the Muſe's bays.

See, where coy Nature's Scandinavian Sage †,
Studious, unfolds her dark botanic laws;
And from her green luxuriant blooming page,
Progreſſive, ever-varying pleaſure draws.—

* Note XIV. † Linnæus.

Mark

Mark how his ſcientific hand diſplays
A world of beauty in each flow'r combin'd;
And traces, through the vegetable maze,
The pow'r and wiſdom of th' Eternal Mind.

And Friendſhip, richeſt boon to haraſs'd life,
Here ſooths the heart with her nectareous balm;
Potent, Life's fev'riſh coil, and Paſſion's ſtrife,
Like oil upon the ſtormy wave, to calm.

—Hark! in what dulcet notes ſome ſpirit ſings,
Like tuneful Ariel, in th' enchanted iſle,
Hov'ring o'er Ferdinand on dove-like wings,
The paſſing hours ſerenely to beguile.

" The ſtar whoſe radiant beams adorn *
" With vivid light the riſing morn,
" The ſeaſon chang'd, with milder ray
" Cheers the calm hour of parting day.
" So Friendſhip, of the generous breaſt
" The earlieſt and the lateſt gueſt,
" In youthful prime with ardour glows,
" And ſweetens Life's ſerener cloſe.—
" Benignant pow'r! in this retreat,
" O deign to fix thy tranquil ſeat;
" Where rais'd above the duſky vale,
" Thy favourites brighter ſuns ſhall hail,

* Note XV.

" And,

" And, from life's buſy ſcenes remote,
" To thee their cheerful hours devote,
" Nor waſte a tranſient thought to know
" What cares diſturb the crowd below."

So may this claſſic Hill and learned eaſe,
O Fox! perennial calm delight impart,
And cordial Friendſhip's Attic converſe pleaſe
Thy lib'ral mind and philanthropic heart!—

MUSE.

—Peace to the lyre! for now the waning night
Warns thee thy tributary ſong to cloſe,
And, ere fair Phoſphor hail Aurora's light,
To ſnatch from care a tranſient calm repoſe.

Then,

Then, like Certesia's anchorets of yore,
Improve from human storms *thy* short release,
And teach her Surrey swains from sacred lore,
" The ways of pleasantness and paths of peace."

NOTES.

NOTE I.

" READ Homer once, and you can read no more;
" For all books elſe appear ſo mean, ſo poor,
" Verſe will ſeem proſe; but ſtill perſiſt to read,
" And Homer will be all the books you need."

Eſſay on Poetry by the Duke of BUCKINGHAM.

NOTE II.

" Sure fate of ALL, beneath whoſe riſing ray
" Each ſtar of meaner merit fades away."

POPE's *Imitations of Horace.*

NOTE III.

Diocleſian lived the laſt nine years of his life like a philoſopher, in his retreat at Salona, in Dalmatia; which ſome writers have believed was his native place. He there amuſed himſelf in cultivating and embelliſhing his gardens and orchards; and was accuſtomed to ſay to his friends, that " he only " began to *live* from the time of his voluntary reſignation of the empire."—

It

It is, moreover, added, that Maximian having endeavoured to prevail upon him to remount the Imperial throne, Diocleſian made him this anſwer: "The poſſeſſion of the Imperial throne is not comparable to the tranquillity "of my preſent life. I take more pleaſure in the cultivation of my garden, "than ever I did formerly in ruling the Roman world."

Extracted from "Le Nouveau Dictionnaire "Hiſtorique, &c. tome 2me. Art. Caius "Valerius Diocletianus. A Caen, 1779."

Note IV.

The Author of the Poem has too ſincere and too great a reſpect for the pre-eminent Character to whom he has therein the honour of addreſſing himſelf, to ſuffer it to be for a moment imagined, that by "*Philoſophy*" he entertains the moſt diſtant idea of alluding to that SPURIOUS *philoſophy* ſo fatally avowed and adopted by the atheiſtical, ſoi-diſant modern Philoſophers of the French and the German continents. The *Philoſophy* alluded to in the *preſent* Poem, in the eighteenth ſtanza, is *that* in which the far more intelligent, liberal, and ſuperior mind to which it is inſcribed, is well known to be very converſant. It is that emanation of genius and wiſdom which ſhed a luſtre, however partial, over the characters, the tenets, and the compoſitions of ſuch men as Socrates, Ariſtotle, Plato, Cicero, Seneca, and other celebrated ancients like them, till the ſun of Chriſtianity aroſe, and diſperſed the miſts that ſtill hovered over the intellectual regions of human reaſon.

Note

NOTE V.

About a mile from Chertſey bridge, according to Camden, is Cowey Stakes, where Cæſar paſſed the Thames (that being the only ſpot then fordable), and entered the territories of Caſſivelaunus. On the other ſide of the river the Britiſh troops had planted themſelves, and had fenced the bank with ſharp ſtakes, ſecurely driven into the ground, which the Venerable Bede ſays, "are ſeen to this day:" and it appears upon the view, that each of them is as thick as a man's thigh; and that being ſoddered with lead, they ſtick into the bottom of the river immovable. "Theſe ſtakes" (Mr. Ireland's work on the Thames is here quoted), "which are of oak, are ſtill diſcernible; though, "from age, they have loſt their former colour. The late Speaker of the "Houſe of Commons, Arthur Onſlow, Eſq. had a ſet of knife and fork "handles made from them, which, when worked, were as black and as heavy "as ebony."

IRELAND'S *Thames, vol.* ii. *p.* 64.

To this account of the gallant ſtand which Caſſivelaunus made againſt his Roman invaders, may be added the following intereſting extracts upon the ſame ſubject, from a curious letter of the celebrated antiquary, Dr. Stukely, to his learned friend Dr. Andrew Coltee Ducarel:

"They that have written of Cæſar's journey hither, had very ſlender no-"tions of it, and of his paſſing the Thames in particular, &c.—The river at "this place (i. e. over againſt Shepperton) is wider than elſewhere any where "near it of ſome miles, and *that* is the reaſon of its being fordable. At *this*

" place Caſvelhan (thus Dr. Stukely gives us the name of the Britiſh prince)
" was determined to make a ſtand againſt the Roman arms. We are to diſ-
" abuſe ourſelves from the vulgar notions of the Britons being ſo barbarous a
" people; none could behave with more policy and valour. At Shepperton,
" Caſvelhan collected all his forces, and thoſe not few; moreover he had
" fortified the bank-ſide with ſharp paliſadoes, and, beſides, the like ſtakes
" were fixed in the very bed of the river under water."

Note VI.

" The marriage of Ethelbert with Bertha, and much more his embracing
" Chriſtianity, begat a connexion of his ſubjects with the French, Italians,
" and other nations on the continent, and tended to reclaim them from their
" groſs ignorance and barbarity, in which all the Saxon tribes had been
" hitherto involved.

" Ethelbert alſo enacted, with the conſent of the ſtates of his kingdom, a
" body of laws, the firſt written laws promulgated by any of the northern
" conquerors; and his reign was in every reſpect glorious to himſelf and
" beneficial to his people."

Hume's *Hiſtory of England. Bowyer's Folio Edition.*

The Author would not do juſtice to a fine picture repreſenting Saint Auguſtin before Ethelbert, painted by Mr. Treſham, and very beautifully engraved by Mr. A. Smith in No. VIII. of the ſame magnificent edition of Hume's

Hume's Hiſtory, were he not to add, that in the 23d, the 24th, and the 25th ſtanzas of this Poem, he had the eye of his fancy fixed upon this picture of the Saxon king's converſion to the Chriſtian religion. So cloſe is the connexion ſubſiſting between poetry and painting, and ſuch friendly aids do theſe ſiſter arts occaſionally impart to each other.

Note VII.

Certeſia, the Author's poetical name for Chertſey, occurs in ſeveral ancient records relative to the abbey of Chertſey, and which are ſtill extant.

The abbey of Chertſey was of the Benedictine order, and founded, as ſome writers aſſert, A. D. 664, or as others in 666, (almoſt as ſoon as the Saxons were converted from Paganiſm,) by Erkenwalde, afterwards biſhop of London; but it was finiſhed and chiefly endowed by Frithland, earl of Surrey. Sir Edward Coke, in that great repoſitory of the common law of this country, his Commentary on Littleton, ſays, that the above-mentioned "Saint Erkenwalde was a younger ſon of Anna, king of the Eaſt Saxons, and "was firſt abbot of Chertſey, in Surrey, which he had founded, and after biſhop "of London—a holy and devout man." The abbey was ſacked and burnt to the ground by the Danes; Dr. Stukely ſays that this happened in the ninth century, when the abbot and ninety of the monks were barbarouſly murdered by thoſe mercileſs invaders. It was afterwards refounded by king Edgar, and dedicated to Saint Peter. Both Edgar and pope Alexander granted the abbey many privileges; and it was ſucceſſively enriched by many diſtinguiſhed patrons and liberal benefactors.

NOTE VIII.

It was in all probability the chapel belonging to the abbey that received the remains of the pious, but unfortunate Henry the Sixth. This circumſtance Shakeſpeare alludes to in the firſt act of Richard the Third; wherein lady Anne, the widow of Edward, prince of Wales, ſon to Henry the Sixth, appears as the mourner in his funeral proceſſion, and ſays, in the concluſion of her lamentations over the ill-fated monarch,

"Come, now, toward Chertſey with your holy load,
"Taken from Paul's to be interred there;
"And ſtill as you are weary of the weight
"Reſt you, whilſt I lament king Henry's corſe."

From Chertſey, according to the aſſertions of various writers, the body was afterwards removed to Windſor by Henry the Seventh, in a private manner.

NOTE IX.

Doctor Stukely, in the letter to Doctor Ducarel already quoted, expreſſes himſelf on this ſubject in the following manner: "I firſt went with eager "ſteps to view the abbey, rather the ſcite of the abbey; for ſo total a diſ- "ſolution I ſcarcely ever ſaw; ſo inveterate a rage againſt every, the leaſt "appearance of it, as if they meant to defeat even the inherent ſanctity "of the ground. Of that noble and ſplendid pile, which took up four

"acres

" acres of ground, and looked like a town, nothing remains; ſcarcely a little
" of the outward wall of the precinctus." The Doctor afterwards adds:—
" I left the ruined ruins of this place, which had been conſecrated to religion
" ever ſince the year 666, with a ſigh for the loſs of ſo much national
" magnificence and national hiſtory. Dreadful was that ſtorm which ſpared
" not, at leaſt, the churches, libraries, painted glaſs, monuments, manu-
" ſcripts; that ſpared not a *little* out of the abundant ſpoil to ſupport them
" for the public honour and emolument."

Note X.

" My eye, deſcending from the hill, ſurveys
" Where Thames among the wanton valleys ſtrays.
" Thames, the moſt lov'd of all the Ocean's ſons
" By his old ſire, to his embraces runs;—
" Haſting to pay his tribute to the ſea,
" Like mortal life to meet eternity.—
" Though with thoſe ſtreams he no reſemblance hold,
" Whoſe foam is amber, and their gravel gold;
" His genuine and leſs guilty wealth t' explore,
" Search not his bottom, but ſurvey his ſhore."

Cooper's Hill.

Note XI.

In a letter to his intimate friend and biographer, Doctor Sprat, afterwards biſhop of Rocheſter, dated at Chertſey, 21ſt May 1665, ſoon after ſettling there, Cowley thus writes: "I do hope to recover my late hurt ſo farre within "five or ſix days (though it be uncertain yet whether I ſhall ever recover it) "as to walk about again. And then, methinks, you and I and the Dean "might be very merry upon *Saint Anne's Hill*."

Preſerved by Peck.

Note XII.

Alluding to moſt of Cowley's Diſcourſes, by way of eſſays in verſe and proſe, beginning at page 672; and particularly to the ſecond of them "on "Solitude," quoted in the third motto of this poem. See vol. ii. octavo edition of Cowley's works, 1710.

Doctor Johnſon, in his Lives of the Poets, cloſes, previous to his acute, but ſevere, critical analyſis of Cowley's Poems, his biographical ſketches of him with the following cynical obſervation: "He did not long enjoy the pleaſure, "or ſuffer the uneaſineſs of ſolitude; for he died at the Porch Houſe, in "Chertſey, in 1667, in the 49th year of his age."

"The Porch Houſe," at Chertſey, wherein Cowley formerly reſided, has loſt that heretofore peculiar denomination: the porch, by which it was thus diſtinguiſhed, having been taken down ſome years ſince. The houſe and the adjoining grounds belong now to Richard Clark, Eſq. the chamberlain of

London: this gentleman has greatly embelliſhed the latter; and, in making a neat and commodious addition to the ancient building, has been induced, out of great reſpect to the memory of this celebrated genius and very excellent man, to preſerve from demolition thoſe parts of it, wherein Cowley is traditionally ſaid to have ſtudied, and to have breathed his laſt.

Note XIII.

See Otway's poem, entitled "Windſor Caſtle," dedicated to the memory of Charles the Second, and alſo to James the Second.—The double dedication, and the poem itſelf, abound with the moſt laviſh panegyric and adulation. "Otway," ſays his biographer, Doctor Johnſon, "appears by ſome of his "verſes to have been a zealous royaliſt; and had, what was in thoſe times, "the common reward of loyalty; he lived and died neglected."

Note XIV.

The Hill itſelf derived its name from a ſmall chapel, built in very remote times upon the ſummit of it, belonging to the abbey, and dedicated to Saint Anne; of which there is now no other veſtige than the rude fragment of a wall.

Note XV.

To theſe elegant verſes the Author of this poem has not the leaſt pretenſion; they are inſcribed in "the Temple of Friendſhip," upon Saint Anne's Hill; and they were written by Right Hon. General Fitzpatrick.

THE END.

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